

LETTER

TO

All the SAINTS,

ON THE

General DUTY of LOVE:

Humbly presented,

By One that is *less than the least* of them
all, and unworthy to be of their happy
Number.

*Beloved, let us love one another: for Love is of
God; and every one that loveth is born of God,
and knoweth God, 1 John iv. 7.*

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LETTER

TO THE

OF THE

General Duty of LOVE:

Heavenly mercy

By God's grace I have the joy of them

and univocally to their happy



Number 1

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It is the duty of every Christian to love his neighbor as himself, and to love God with all his heart, mind, and strength.

These are the first and greatest commandments, which if a man love, he shall abide in them, and I will abide in him.

John 13:34-35

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ON THE

General Duty of LOVE.

Much honour'd, and beloved Brethren,

YOU may well wonder at my Boldness in this general Address. I beg leave to assure you, That it is not from a Sense of my Ability, but of Duty. Nothing less than a full Persuasion, That it is the Mind of your great Lord, to send you a Message by so mean a Worm could have induc'd me to it. Humble yourselves therefore to a *little Child*, and despise not the *Lispings* of a *Babe*, as the Lord of Heaven and Earth shall reveal his

Mind to it, and open the *Babe's Mouth*, to point out the same unto you.

Love to God, and our Neighbour, is the Sum of our Duty requir'd by the Moral Law; and most strongly is this enforc'd by the Grace of the Gospel. We should love God for himself, for the infinite Excellencies of his great Being, and for his great Goodness towards us, and especially, as display'd in Christ. And we should love every Thing else for his Sake; all Creatures and Things, according to that Relation they bear to him, and the Displays of his Glory which is upon them. Hence it is, that the Saints ought to have the chief Place in our Affections; and especially, as this is our Lord's Command. *This is my Commandment*, (says he) *That ye love one another, as I have loved you*, John xv. 12. And saith the Apostle *John, Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another*, 1 John iv. 11. Love to the Saints therefore, being the *Theme* I would insist on, I shall as enabled, give some Hints,

I. Of the Reasons and Grounds, why the Saints should love one another.

II. Of the Duty itself, or what is contained in it.

III. Of the Ends of it, or what should induce us to the Performance hereof. And

IV. With a Word of Exhortation conclude the whole, I begin with,

I. The

! The Reasons and Grounds, why the Saints should love one another. And

1. The Love of God to us, is the great, the original Ground why we should love one another. The Love of God to us, in all his Persons, lays us under the highest Obligation to love him again, and one another for his Sake.

Are we, our individual Persons, beloved of God the Father in Election? Hath he fixt his Heart's Love upon us, pass'd by others, and *chosen us* in his dear Son before the World was, unto endless Glory with him; altho' as consider'd Sinners, we had deserv'd a Place in eternal Torments with the Devils? Oh what Obligation doth this lay us under, to love him and his! Has God the Father, of old, appointed us to obtain Salvation thro' Jesus Christ, and to be Happy in Time, and to Eternity in a Love-union with himself and each other in his dear Son? And shall we be at Variance among ourselves! Shall we, by want of Love to each other, do all that in us lies, to thwart this great End of electing Love!

Are we *redeemed* by the Lamb's Blood, out of every Nation, Kindred, Tongue and People, from endless Misery to eternal Glory? Oh what Obligation doth this lay us under, to love the Redeemer, and his Redeemed! Has our dear Lord *loved us, and given himself for us*, to make us one in Love among ourselves, one in him, and in the Father? And shall we yet be

at Variance; as if the Lamb was not slain! Shall we by want of Unity of Affection with each other, do all in us lies, to contradict the great End of his Death, and hereby walk as Enemies to the Cross of Christ!

Are we the *Temples of the Holy Ghost*? Has the Holy Spirit, sent from the Father and the Son, come down, in his boundless Love, and took Possession of our Souls; to form Christ's Image, his Love-Image there, and to bring us up to that Love-Unity with God, and each other, which was ordain'd and procur'd for us, in Electing and Redeeming Grace? How great is our Obligation hence, to love the Holy Ghost and those in whom he dwells! The World hath not seen, known, nor received him. But is this our happy Lot, from the Riches of distinguishing Favour? Surely we are Debtors to the Spirit! And shall we, by being at Variance among ourselves, do all we can to contradict the great End of the Spirit's Work! Shall we hereby, slight the Father's, and the Son's Love in sending him, and the Spirit's Love in being sent, in his Indwelling Presence with us, and gracious Operations upon us! Oh shall we dishonour, and grieve the Heavenly Dove, by retaining any Bitterness and Wrath against the *Doves* in whom he dwells, the Doves our Companions! Oh may the Love of God, of this Three-One God to us, constrain us to love one another with a pure Heart fervently!

2. That

2. That near *Relation* which the Saints have to God, and that special Interest he hath in them, is another Ground why we should love them. They are the *Children* of God's Love, his dear Children. God the Father hath predestinated them into the Adoption of Children by Jesus Christ unto himself. He has set them apart for himself as his own Children, in Distinction from all the World beside. He has settled an Inheritance upon them, no less than his great SELF! He hath form'd the Image of his Son in them, and given them *the Spirit of Adoption*, whereby they cry *Abba, Father*. They are the Brethren of Jesus Christ: Heirs of God, and Joint-Heirs with him. Yea, they are the Bride the Lamb's Wife, the Spouse, the Queen of the King of Glory. They are the Members of his Body, the Fulness of him who filleth all in all. They are the Temples of the Holy Ghost; He hath chosen them for his Habitation, and dwells in them as his Rest for ever. They are the Choice of the Father, the Purchase of the Son, and the Conquest of the Spirit. The LORD hath chosen, bought, possess'd them for himself, as his own Portion. He esteems them as his Jewels, his peculiar Treasure; and they are unspeakably precious, and highly honourable in his Sight. They are his honourable Servants to do his glorious Work, his faithful Witnesses in the Earth, and his shining Lights in a dark World. He calls them

his Joy below, and will rejoice over them as his Crown of Glory above. How dearly then should we love one another, how highly should we esteem each other in Love for the Lord's Sake!

3. The *Excellency* of the Saints, is another Reason why we should love them. They are the *Excellent of the Earth*; in whom is all Christ's Delight. And are they not then, worthy to be ours! The Lord of Glory, casts the Rays of his Glory upon them, and makes them splendid in his own Brightness. He admires his Beauties in their Eye, in their Countenance, and says they have *ravish'd his Heart*. And shall not we then, admire their Beauty, and love them exceedingly! There is none like them in the Earth. They are Men of another Spirit from the Men of the World. They are of a more noble Extract, of an Heavenly Birth, and bound for an Heavenly Country. And are therefore most lovely in themselves, and most worthy of Love from all those who have Eyes to see their Glory. If it is an Excellency of the Mind, to approve of Things which are excellent; Oh what an excellent Duty, what an excellent Grace is this of Love to the Saints, these excellent, lovely, precious Ones!

4. That near *Relation* which the Saints have to each other, is another Reason why we should love them. We are all of One, Children of the same Father. Dear Children, unspeakably dear to him who hath adopted us, unto him who

who hath begotten us; and should therefore walk in Love. We are Brethren; and should therefore have brotherly Kindness to each other. Since we are Brethren; we should not strive, nor fall out by the Way; but be one in Affection, as we are one in Relation. Again, the Saints are Members of the same Body, of that Body whereof Christ is the Head. *"No Man ever yet hated his own Flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the Church."* Our dear Lord Jesus lov'd us all as Members of his own Body, as Parts of himself, of his mystical Fulness. And shall we not love one another as such? What an horrid amazing Thing it would be in Nature, to see a Man pierce and wound his own Flesh? To abuse with Cruelty the Members of his own Body? And shall we Saints, who are the most excellent of Men, be guilty of such horrid Unkindness, such unnatural Cruelty, by nourishing any Disaffection against our Brethren, our Fellow-Members! Oh let all that name the Name of Christ, depart from this Iniquity, and be united in Love, as they are One in Relation!

5. That *Community* the Saints have in *Sufferings and in Glories*, is a great Reason why they should love one another. The same common Enemies, Sin, Satan and the World, are jointly engag'd against them all. They all *groan* being *burdened*, with an indwelling Body of Sin and Death; a *Law* which they find in *their Members*,

Members, that warreth against the Law of their Minds, and bringeth them into Captivity to the Law of Sin and Death. Satan their grand Enemy, incessantly molests and fights against them all. He either sets Gins and Snares to take them by his Subtilty and Flattery, or terrifies them with his Rage as a roaring Lion. One way or other he is always seeking to devour them. The same Afflictions, of this Kind, are accomplished in the Brethren, throughout the whole World, not one of them escapes Sufferings from the Policy and Power of Hell, from the Legions of Devils combin'd against them. And as for the World of wicked Men, they all hate them. Christ has chosen his People out of the World; and therefore the World hate them. He hath sent them into the World, to do some Work or other for him; and the World slight, despise and reproach them: Yea, were it in their Power, would extirpate them out of the Earth. And all these Enemies, Sin, Satan and the World, even all the Powers of Darkness within and without, are combined together against the Saints, against all of them, to overthrow their Faith, to hinder their Holiness, to destroy their Comfort, and to prevent their Usefulness in the Earth; and so, their glorifying their Father in this World, and their Crown of Glory in that to come. And one main Way in which they labour to perform their Enterprizes against them is this; By doing all they can

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to break their Love to each other. Oh then, what Reason have the Saints to love one another! To watch and pray, and use all appointed Means, that brotherly Love may continue! Are all the Enemies of Christ and the Saints, combined together against them all? And do they all strive to break their Love? Oh how should the Saints mutually love and sympathize with each other in their joint Sufferings? And labour to unite so much the closer in Love, as the Enemies seek to divide them! Sin is their bitter Enemy. And shall they not sympathize with one another in their Sufferings on this Account? Satan roars against them. And shall they not compassionate each other, in whatever Kind or Degree he prevails over them? The World hate them. And shall they not love one another? Especially, as they are all hated for Christ, their Lord and Master's Sake? Oh shall the dear Saints, join Issue with the Powers of Darkness, and hate and persecute, bite and devour one another! Oh shall we not watch, pray and strive against this Sin, this horrid Sin, of Want of Love to the Saints, which is such a Reproach to the Christian Name!

Again, That Community which the Saints have in Glories, should oblige them to love one another. They are all beloved of God, of Father, Son, and Spirit, chosen, redeemed and call'd by the same Grace. They are wash'd from their Sins in the Lamb's Blood, justify'd in

his

his Righteousness, and adorn'd with his Spirit and Graces. They are all made Kings and Priests unto God. They are all honour'd to be the Servants of God, and of the Lord *Jesus Christ*. They are all jointly engag'd in the Lord's Work; as valiant Soldiers under the Captain of their Salvation, in the same War against the Powers of Darkness; and concern'd to promote one common Interest, even the glorious Cause of their Royal Master. They are all Heirs together of the Grace of Life now, of that Life which Free Grace hath made theirs; and shall ere long be Possessors together of the Life of Glory. And since the Saints have such a Community in Glories; Oh what Unity of Affection should there be among themselves! But,

6. Add to all these; the *Command* of God, and of the Lord *Jesus Christ*, that we should love one another: And how great is the Saints Obligation to this Duty. *And this is his Commandment, (saith the Apostle John) That we should believe on the Name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another as he gave us Commandment, 1 John iii. 23. And saith our Lord, These Things I command you, That ye love one another, John xv. 17. And, if ye love me, keep my Commandments, Chap. xiv. 15. And, This is the Love of God, That we keep his Commandments, 1 John v. 3.* Oh then, if we have any Regard to the Divine Authority over us, or a Spark of Ingenuity in our Souls to the God of Love, let

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us love one another, as he hath given us Commandment ! But, to give some Hints,

II. Of the Duty itself, or what is contained in it. And in general, it contains,

1. The inward Affection of Love in the Heart. And,

2. The outward Expression thereof all Manner of Ways:

For the *first*, we are commanded to *be kindly affectioned to each other* ; and to *love one another with a pure Heart fervently*. In which is forbidden, all Disaffection, Wrath, Envy, Hatred and Malice against our Brethren ; and requir'd, That we love them simply, purely, as we love ourselves, with the same Kind of Love ; that from a Dearness, a Strength of Affection, we interest ourselves in all their Joys and Sorrows, participate with them in both, and make them by Sympathy, in a Sort, our own. And,

Hence, *secondly*, all Manner of outward Unkindness to our Brethren, and evil Entreating of them is forbidden ; and all Manner of outward Expressions of Kindness requir'd, or that we express our Kindness to them all Manner of Ways. And who can reckon up all the Ways wherein the Saints should outwardly express the inward Affection of their Hearts to each other ? But in general, they may be reduc'd to this : That in all Things, and at all Times, we do to all the Saints, as we would they should unto us. And the Pattern, the Exemplar of the Kindness we should

should shew to each other, is very high: That we love one another, in our Measure, both inwardly and outwardly, as *Christ* hath loved us. That we think no Service too mean, nor Work too hard to serve our Brethren in, which the Lord hath commanded. No, not to lay down our Lives for them, should the Honour of God and Truth, and the Service of their Faith and Joy make it necessary. How great then is that Brotherly Kindness, which the Saints ought to have unto each other! In this Brotherly Kindness, as whatever is contrary to Love is forbidden, and all Things contained in it commanded; so there are four Channels especially, in which this Love should run. 1. Compassion towards our Brethren in their Sins and Sufferings. 2. Forbearance towards them in their present imperfect State. 3. Earnest Endeavours after their Happiness and Glory. And, 4. Rejoicing with them in all their Joy.

1. *Compassion* towards them in their Sins and Sufferings. This doubtless is contained in that Duty of Love which we owe to the Saints; and ought to be like a Water-Course, through which our Love should flow out upon them. We should consider our Brethren as being ourselves also in the Body, liable to Sins and Sorrows. And not be angry with them when they have sinn'd; no not tho' they have sinn'd against us. We may be angry with Sin, but not with our sinning Brother. We ought to love his Person; while
angry

angry with his Sin. " If we would *be angry and*
be not, we must (as a dear deceased Servant
 of Christ, once observ'd) be angry with no-
 thing but Sin." Sin is indeed the most hate-
 ful Evil, and our Brethren have this hateful Evil
 abiding in them; and through the Subtilty of Sa-
 tan and the Snares of the World, they are liable
 to fall into Sin many Ways. And when they
 have so done, let us by Love and Sympathy make
 their Case our own; and behave towards them,
 as we would be glad to have them do towards
 us, were they in our Case, and we in theirs.
 Let us consider that their Sins are their Suffer-
 ings, their Soul-Sicknesses, and Heart-Wounds;
 and commiserate them accordingly. And let
 our Pity towards them be shewn, in endeavour-
 ing to *restore them in the Spirit of Meekness*; let
 us set their broken Bones with all possible Ten-
 derness, *Gal. vi. 1.*

We ought not *in any wise*, to *suffer Sin upon*
 our Brother. This is no Piece of Love to him,
 but of Hatred, *Lev. xix. 17.* And yet, in ap-
 pearing against our Brother's Sin, let us do it
 with all Meekness, Wisdom, and Faithfulness;
 and with all the Privacy the Case will bear, ac-
 cording to the Rules our Lord has given us in
 his Word. If our Brother's Fault be private, let
 us not make it publick; and thereby wound the
 publick Honour of Jesus Christ, and uncover
 our Brother's Nakedness. And if his Fault be
 in some Sort publick; let us be careful that we
 spread

spread it no farther than is necessary for his Restoration; than to the Church he relates to, if a Church-Member. And in all private Cases, let us watch to keep them so. If our Brother offends us, let us tell him his Fault between him and us alone, and say nothing of it to others. And whatever it be, that we judge to be a Fault in our Brother, whether against us directly, or not, if we think it worth our Notice, let us acquaint him with it, and labour to make him sensible of it. And if we are not disposed so to do, if it be not so great as to become Matter of Conscience to acquaint him with it, never let us mention it to others. And let us be exceeding careful, that we don't nourish evil Surmisings, or think Evil of our Brother without Cause. Let us be unwilling to entertain a Thought that may weaken our Love to him. And let us consider, that we can't think, nor speak Evil of our Brethren, without sufficient Ground, and an absolute Necessity, a just Call so to do, without thinking and speaking Evil of Christ. He takes what is done to them, as done to himself. We can't wound the Members, but the Head feels it. We can't touch our Brethren in their Name, but we touch the Apple of Christ's Eye. We can't touch them in their Name, but we hinder their Usefulness, and do all we can to eclipse the Glory of Christ in them. Yea, we can't touch them in their Name, but we wound ourselves; the Dishonour we cast upon them, reflects
upon

upon us, by reason of their near Relation to us, as Members of the same Body. And especially let us beware, of depreciating, or lessening our Brother, to raise our own Esteem. This is hating Christ, and him with a Witness; yea, 'tis hating ourselves; we shall fall into the Pit we have digged for another. The same Measure we mete, shall be measured to us again. Our Lord will have it so, as a just Rebuke for our provoking Evil. Indeed he has reserv'd to himself a Liberty, when to chastise, and to pardon us. But if he spare us, if he deal not with us according to our Desert; let not our Sin hereby, be the less in our own Sight. When any of our Brethren are fallen therefore, let us not triumph over them, despise, insult, and upbraid them with their Faults. Let us not have high Thoughts of ourselves, as if we were better than they; the Case might have been, and perhaps, as bad or worse, may be our own. No reason have we to be high-minded, but to fear. And let us be as careful to cover our Brother's Infirmities, as to hide our own. Christ covers innumerable Faults in us, with the Mantle of his Love, and brings us to a Sense of our Evil in private, between him and us alone: He brings nothing to publick View, unless there is an absolute Necessity for it; that we will not otherwise be reclaim'd. And shall we not so love our Brethren? If therefore, we would not wound Christ, kill our Brethren, and pierce ourselves through with many Sorrows,

let us not speak Evil of them without Cause, nor be cruel to them when fallen into Sin; but in compassionate Tenderness, labour to restore each other, whenever we are overtaken with a Fault.

And as soon as the Lord gives Repentance, and manifests Pardon unto any of our sinning Brethren, let us from the Heart forgive them too, confirm our Love towards them, and mention their Faults no more; even as Christ, and *God for his Sake hath forgiven us, and remembers our Sins no more*, 2 Cor. ii. 7. Eph. iv. 32. And though our Brethren should often offend and grieve us, yet should we bear with, and exercise all Long-suffering towards them; considering how much the Lord bears with in us daily, and that infinite Patience and Long-suffering, which he exerciseth towards us, under all our repeated Provocations. *Peter put the Question to our Lord, How oft shall my Brother sin against me, and I forgive him? until seven Times? To which our Lord reply'd, I say not unto thee, until seven Times; but, until seventy Times seven*, Matt. xviii. 21, 22. If therefore such a forgiving Spirit, and such abundant Forgiveness is Part of that Duty of Love which we owe to our Brethren; what Reason have we all to say, *Lord, increase our Faith!* To be of a bitter, unforgiving Spirit, towards our Brethren, under the Misery of their Falls into Sin, when the Lord gives them Repentance, reflects the highest Dishonour upon our merciful Father, our forgiving God; and is
a Piece

A Piece of Cruelty to his dear Children. There is no Case the Saints can be in, while in the World, wherein they want so much Pity and Tenderness to be shewn them, as when wounded by Sin. If therefore we would love them at all, let us be sure to do it when they most want it. The Time of their Misery, ought in an especial Manner to be the Time of our Mercy and Compassion toward them. Then it is most needed, and will be most welcome. When the dear Saints are fallen into Sin, all Things within and without seem to be up in Arms against them: Their Soul is as it were among Lions, roaring upon them on every Side to devour them, the Guilt of Sin wounds their Souls exceedingly, even after Forgiveness hath been spoken to them; and Satan makes a hideous Noise about it, and pierceth them with his fiery Darts. And sad it is to say, the dear Saints are then, so narrow-spirited, that they oft stand aloof from the Sore of their wounded Brethren. And, poor Hearts, they are apt to be afraid, that the Lord in Anger will cast them off. Now, at such a Time as this, to have a Friend to love them, a Brother to know their Soul in Adversity, to speak a Word of Comfort to them, to pour Oil and Wine into their Wounds, and bind up their Sorrows; Oh what an Ease, what a Refreshment doth this afford them! And, on the other Hand, if we are cruel to them at such a Time, if we talk to the Grief of those whom God hath wound-

ed, if we crush under our Feet the Prisoners of the Earth; Oh what Manner of Cruelty is it! A most provoking Evil this, in the Sight of God; and we can't take a readier Way to bring the Rod upon our own Backs. If therefore there be any Love to *Christ*, any *Fellowship of the Spirit*, any *Bowels and Mercies* in our Souls towards our poor Brethren; let us with compassionate Tenderness forgive and comfort them under all their Sins and Sufferings on this Account!

And so likewise, in all *their Sufferings* on what Account soever, whether more private or publick, let us bear a Part with them. Let us in sympathizing Love, put our Shoulder under their Burden. For this we are commanded, that we *bear one another's Burdens*; and so fulfil the *Law of Christ*; i.e. *Of loving each other, even as he hath loved us*, Gal. vi. 2. There is not the least Kind or Degree of Sufferings affects the Members of *Christ*, even the very least of them, but the Head feels it. *We have not an High-Priest that cannot be touched with the Feeling of our Infirmities.* And in all our *Affliction* he is *afflicted*. In boundless Compassion he bears a Part with us. Aye, the whole of what we bear by Sympathy. Our Afflictions are the Afflictions of *Christ*. And from his Sympathy with us, he affords all Succour to us. And if the Head is so full of Sympathy with the Members, and from thence helps them right early; shall not the Members sympathize with each other, and

and afford all the mutual Succours they are capable of? In Nature, if one Member suffer, the rest sympathize, and shew their Readiness to help the diseased, distressed Member. And shall it not be so in Grace. Oh if we lov'd *Christ*, and one another for his Sake as we ought, there would not be an Affliction touch any Child of God in the World, but we should bear a Part of it as soon as it came to our Knowledge! And how great that Part would be, I cannot say. Doubtless, if our Hearts were full of Love, we should be full of Sympathy. Our Souls would run into one another; we should have, as it were, but one Soul. All our Burdens would be but one; and all our Strength one to bear it. Oh how easy is a heavy Burden to many Shoulders, that would press one to the Ground! If we love *Christ* then, and love one another, let us run under each others Burdens; bear our Part, and help away with the Load. Let us *remember them that are in Bonds, as bound with them; and them that suffer Adversity, as being ourselves also in the Body*, Heb. xiii. 3. But,

2. Another Channel in which our Love to the Saints should run, is *Forbearance* towards them in their present imperfect State. We don't all yet see Eye to Eye. There are different Measures of Faith and Light distributed among the Saints by the Sovereign Lord of all, both with Respect to the Doctrine of the Gospel and the Discipline of the Church. And thro' the Cor-

ruption of our Nature, there is an Aptness to slight and despise, yea, to speak Evil of our Brethren that are not just of our Length and Breadth. This is contrary to Love. If we love our Brethren as we ought, we shall love them for *Christ's* Sake, because they belong to *Christ*; and not merely, first or principally, because they are of the same Way of Thinking with us. The Way to Heaven is indeed strait, yet is there some Latitude in it. The Saints, as Strangers and Pilgrims on Earth, are all travelling Home to their Father's House in Heaven, in *Christ* the strait Way. Yet some walk in *Christ* in one Path of Duty, and some in another, according to the Proportion of Faith, given them. And tho' we don't all walk in the same Path, yet shall we all meet at last; *Christ* the Way will bring us all to the Father. And shall we not then love as Brethren! if we can't walk together in all Things, as to Externals, let us walk in Love, even all that are *Christ's*, in the very inward Affection of our Souls to each other. So far as we can discern any to hold the Head *Christ*, of which we ourselves are Members, let us be one in Love with them. If they hold the fundamental Doctrines of the Gospel, or such of them, that we can't but judge them to be true Believers in *Christ*, that have *passed from Death to Life, and shall not come into Condemnation*; let us beware of any Disaffection towards them for Things of less Moment.

But

But here I would not be mistaken, as if I thought, that any of the Truths of *Christ*, either as to Doctrine or Discipline, were little in themselves, and not much to be regarded by us. Nor, that we ought not to *contend earnestly for the Faith once deliver'd to the Saints*. Nor yet, that we ought not to *obey the Truth* so far as we know it. No: Truth, every Part of it is precious: We ought to *buy it*, and *sell it not*; to put a Value upon it according to its own Worth, and not to part with a Jot of it. And so far as we discern the Truth, we ought to be living Witnesses thereof in the Earth. And by no Means ought we to imprison or disobey the Truth, by yielding to any Error, either in Doctrine or Discipline, contrary to the Light of our own Consciences. For these Things are a main Part of our Generation-Work in the Earth. And they well consist with that Duty of Love which we owe to the Saints; yea, they are a Part of it. We ought to do these as our Duty in Love to them, even those of them that differ from us in some Points; that if the Lord please, their Eyes may be opened, and they brought to know and walk in the Way of God more perfectly.

Nor yet do I think, that we may not lawfully have a greater Complacency in those Saints which walk more eminently in the Truth than others. Doubtless there is a peculiar Sweetness attends Communion, where Brethren are agreed

in Judgment. And Unity in Judgment tends to make Unity of Affection more strong. And justly ought to do so, so far as our Brethren walk with us in the Truth. That is, we ought to love them as holding the Truth; not for our own Sakes, because they hold the same Truths that we do; but for the Truth's Sake that dwelleth in them and us. But then, our Love to the Brethren, ought not to be confined to those only that are agreed with us in Judgment; but to extend itself to all, even to those which differ the most from us. We are not to love their Imperfections, Darkness, Errors; but ought to love their Persons under them. To love them as Brethren, to love them for *Christ's* Sake, as they are his Servants, his Children, and Members of his Body. And how great this Love towards them should be, is more than I can account for.

But doubtless there are these Things included in it: 1. A bearing with them as to Faith and Practice, or a Suffering of them to believe and do according to their present Measures of Light, without reflecting upon them because they don't think and act as we. 2. Forbearance towards them, as to imposing Matters of our Faith and Practice upon them, or requiring them to receive and conform thereto before they are able to bear them, and resenting the same with Displeasure if they do not. And, 3. Behaving towards them with *all Lowliness of Mind, Meekness and Long-Suffering; endeavouring to keep the Unity*

of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace. Eph. iv. 2, 3. We ought to bear with our Brethren that differ from us, to forbear them in Love, and to exercise all Long-Suffering towards them with all Lowliness, and Meekness; endeavouring in all to keep the Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace; to be one with them in Love, without Wrath, Envy and War against them. We ought not to have high Thoughts of ourselves, and low of our Brethren, as if we were better than they. But should well remember, who it is that maketh us to differ from another, and that a Man can receive nothing unless it is given him from above. That as we have nothing but what we did receive, so we have no reason to boast, the whole Glory thereof being due to God, and not unto us. And likewise, that if we by God's Free-Grace, are made to excel our Brethren in some Things, they excel us in others. That as they are Members of the same Body with us, the Lord hath put *more abundant Honour upon that part which lacked: that there should be no Schism in the Body; but that the Members should have the same Care one for another.* In forbearing our Brethren in Love, in all Lowliness and Meekness, we are requir'd to *esteem others better than ourselves, and in Honour to prefer them.* And good Reason have we so to do; for even the least of our Brethren are in some Respects better than we, and worthy of more Honour. We should *not look every*

every one on our own Things, but on the Things of others. And well it becomes us, to think ourselves the least and last of all; and not worthy to be of the Body, of the Family of Christ, to have a Name among the Brethren, the Servants of our great Lord. And has Free-Grace put us among the Children? Oh let us admire it! And for what End has it put us there? Is it to despise, persecute and hate them! Oh let us well remember from whence we were taken; from Hell in Desert, to be Children and Heirs of Heaven! That in Time passed, we were Gentiles in the Flesh, Children of Wrath by Nature even as others; that at that Time we were Strangers from the Covenants of Promise, without Hope, and without God in the World. And has Free-Grace made us nigh, to be no more Strangers and Foreigners, but Fellow-citizens with the Saints, and of the Household of God? Oh let us ever humbly keep our Place as the least and last of all, as it were at the Threshold of the House, loving, admiring and praising the Children, the Servants within! Let us not lift up the Horn against any of them, but humbly shrink into our own Nothingness, and give the Cheek unto every one that smiteth! But pity it is, that there should be any smiting one another, among the Fellow Servants of the Prince of Love; who dy'd to bring us into a perfect Love-unity with himself, and with each other! Oh that there were such a Spirit in us, that we might all of
us,

us, delightfully stoop to each other, while each takes up other in his Arms and embraceth him! That there might be no room for any of us to seek ourselves, our own Love and Honour; our Brethren being so exceedingly zealous of both for us! If that great Man of God, the Apostle *Paul*, said of himself, *I am less than the least of all Saints*; Oh what low, debasing Thoughts should such little, little Things as we, have of ourselves! and what Love and Honour are hence due to our Brethren! And if we ought to love them for Christ's sake, and as employ'd for him, (all of 'em in one Kind or Degree or other) Oh how great should be the Estimation we have of them, and that Forbearance we should exercise towards them! But,

3. Another Channel in which our Love to the Saints should run, is, *earnest Endeavours after their Happiness and Glory*. If we love them, we should seek their Good. It is the Nature of Love, not to seek its own, but the Good and Happiness of the Object beloved. The Saints are beloved of God, and appointed to Happiness and Glory, and therefore we ought to love them, and seek these for them. And the Happiness and Glory of the Saints, relate, 1. To their Persons. 2. To their Work. And, 3. To their Reward. Their Happiness and Glory with respect to their Persons, consists, in their Holiness and Joy, the Increase, and Abundance of both. With respect to their Work, in their Assistance
for

for it, and Success in it. And with respect to their Reward, in that abundant Peace, which like a River is extended to them here, and that Praise, Honour and Glory which shall be conferred upon them in the Day of Christ. All which we are to seek for the Saints most earnestly; whether consider'd distinctly, or jointly, as particular Believers, or united Bodies in Church Fellowship. We are to say concerning them in both Respects, *Peace be within thy Walls, and Prosperity within thy Palaces. For my Brethren and Companions sake, because of the House of the LORD our God, I will seek thy Good*, Psal. cxxii. 7, 8, 9. And this we are to say, 1. By bearing them upon our Hearts before the Lord continually, and intreating his Blessing upon them! that they may increase with all the Increases of God; be assisted and succeeded in their Work; and have abundant Peace here, and a weighty Crown of Glory at Christ's appearing. And, 2. We are most earnestly to endeavour after the Good and Happiness of the Saints, in affording them all the Assistance that we can, whether for Soul or Body; to make their present Lives comfortable, useful, fruitful, and their future Glory full. Whatever our Brethren need, whether for Spirituals or Temporals, that we have and can impart, if we *shut up the Bowels of our Compassion* towards them; *how dwelleth the Love of God in us?* Love is communicative, and affords all the Assistance it can

can to the Person beloved. If we lov'd our Brethren, how ready should we be to help and serve them in their outward Wants! If we lov'd them, how ready should we be to impart spiritual Gifts to them! Oh that ever there should be any wretched Selfishness in our Souls; any Carelessness about our Brethren's Welfare! If therefore we love Christ and them, let us earnestly seek their Happiness and Glory. And in order hereto, let us not be Strangers to each other as little as possible: Let us acquaint ourselves with the Saints, get Knowledge of their Cases, make them our own, carry them to the Lord, and afford all the Help to them we are capable of.

Visiting the Saints, is one of the Duties of Love we owe them. They that fear the Lord, should speak often one to another. And I have experienc'd a very great Blessing to attend it, unto mutual Edification in Love. 'Tis a Part of the Communion of Saints. And let us not make Excuses, that we han't Time, &c. Short visits, well improv'd, are far preferable to long ones mis-improv'd. If we would have our Visits spiritual, to turn to some Account to the Glory of God, the Good of our Brethren, and to our own Advantage, let us first seek God, that he would go with us to his dear Children. And when we come to them, let us instantly begin with spiritual Converse, to know the State of their Souls. And watch that the whole of
our

our Discourse be spiritual and pertinent, that we don't step out for a Moment into needless, vain Conversation. And when we return, let us spread all before the Lord, give Thanks, and pray for them as the Case requires; and supplicate the Throne for a Blessing to rest upon them and us, in that Labour of Love we have been enabled to perform towards them. And when we know their Cases, let us keep them as private as we do our own, and only use our Interest with God for them, and labour to speak a Word in Season to them. It is the Glory of a Christian to be like Christ; and the more Likeness to him we attain, the more room will there be in our Hearts for the Cases of his Children. If we lov'd them *with a pure Heart fervently*, we should have an Ear open to all their Complaints, and a Bosom large enough to receive all their Griefs, their Sorrows, and their Joys; and be sensibly touch'd with both, as we got Knowledge thereof in visiting them. Oh were such Visits mutually, frequently, and conscientiously kept up among the Saints; how much would they promote Heart-Unity, and Brotherly Love among them! And how directly would they tend to each others Happiness and Glory! But this by the Way.

Are any of the Saints dejected? Let us do all we can to comfort them. Are they Feeble-minded? Let us support them. Are they Tempted? Let us succour them. Are they Diseased?

Let

Let us heal them. Are they Dark and Cold? Let us warm and enlighten them. Are they ready to faint? Let us bring them Cordials. Are they in Prison? Let us seek their Liberty. And in a Word, let us do all we can, all manner of Ways, to nourish and cherish them, and to encourage them in the Way and Work of the Lord, in the Closet, Family, and Church; that their Holiness may increase, and their Usefulness be abundant; that their Happiness may be great in this World, and their Glory in that to come. Once more,

4. Let us *rejoice* with the Saints in all their Joy. For this is a Channel in which our Love towards them should flow. As we should *weep with them that weep*, so likewise, *rejoice with them that rejoice*. If one Member is honour'd, the rest should rejoice with it, *Rom. xii. 15.* *1 Cor. xii. 26.* If our Brethren increase in Grace, Gifts, Honour and Usefulness, we love them not, if we don't rejoice with them. And in this Duty of Love, in rejoicing with them, as all Envy and Evil speaking against them is forbidden, so all Joy, in the inward Affection, and outward Expressions thereof commanded.

We ought in no wise to grudge at, and envy our Brethren, when they rise in Grace, Gifts and Usefulness, in Honour and Esteem; no, though they be near us, and we may imagine that our own is somewhat eclipsed thereby. Oh what wretched Selfishness is it, when we are afraid our

Brethren should out-shine us, and therefore slight them in our Hearts, and speak lightly, or perhaps reproachfully of them to others, and tell their Faults, to eclipse their Virtues, that we might rise by their Ruin! And whatever Pretence Sin and Satan may make for such Practices, as, that God might be glorify'd in us, that our own Esteem, and so our Usefulness might not be hindred, &c. they really at the Bottom, spring from Hatred to God and our Brother, from inordinate Self-Love, and accursed Pride. If we grudge at, and envy our Brethren's Happiness and Joy, we therein hate God, that Father, Son, and Spirit should be glorify'd in the Saints. We hate them, that they should enjoy the Comfort, and shine in the Glory the Lord hath given them. And we exalt ourselves above what is meet; and by inordinate Self-Love, and accursed Pride, really hate ourselves too. Oh what are we, that the Glory of God must be eclipsed, must die in his better Children, his better Servants, that it may live and shine in us; or rather, that we may live and shine! What are we, that our Brethren must be nothing, that we may subsist, that we may be something! Is not this Murder of the highest Kind? Is it not like the Sin of Devils? Is it not saying in our Hearts, *I will ascend above the Stars of God: I will be like the most High?* Yea, is it not saying *I AM, and there is none beside me?* And oh, what an Hell doth this Sin deserve! And what a Death did it
cost

that our Lord, to save us from it! Oh that
 that we, who might not live and reign in our mor-
 tal Bodies, *that we should obey it in the Lusts*
thereof! That there might not be just Ground
 for any to say, that we speak well of none but
 ourselves! Or of those of our own Mind, that
 are far enough from us, to interfere with our
 Love and Esteem! And in order hereto, let us
 consider,

That it is meet, our God, should display his
 Glories in, upon, and by all his Saints; and that
 he is worthy to be loved, admired, and glorified
 by us in them all. That it is meet, our Brethren
 should quietly possess all that Happiness and Joy
 which Free Grace bestows upon them. And
 that they by shining in their own Sphere, will
 not hinder our Brightness. Oh shall we limit
 an infinite Being, and desire his manifestative
 Glories to be confined to ourselves! Shall we
 think our Brethren unworthy of that Glory,
 which God has thought them worthy of! And
 that their Brightness will eclipse ours! No; far
 be such a Spirit from us! The God of our Lord
 Jesus Christ, the Father of Glory, hath laid out
 the exceeding Riches of his Grace, in allotting
 the Saints their several Orbs, their several Spheres
 of Action, and Glories, with which they shine,
 in the Church-Heaven. And one by perform-
 ing his own Duty, and shining in his own Glory,
 don't hinder another in what properly belongs to
 him, any more than the Stars of Heaven in their
 C different

different Orbs, obstruct each other's Motion, or obscure each other's Brightness; Or than the Angels of Light, in their different Orders, and several Employments, interfere with each other's Service, or Glory. The Glory of one Star, of one Angel, of one Saint, is not the less for the superior Brightness of another. And the Glory of each is as full as his Sphere is capable of. So perfect, that nothing can be added to it, either for the Glory of the Creator, or the Happiness of the Creature. The Stars in the Firmament, keep their Place, well agree, and in their different Orbs, jointly declare their Maker's Glory. The Angels in Heaven, well pleas'd with their several Stations, are at perfect Unity among themselves: They well approve of their various Orders, as the most full Display of their Creator's Glory, and the most compleat Happiness for them; and harmoniously agree to give him all the Praise. And shan't the Saints like their Places, that luminous Sphere which is allotted to each of them! Shall they seek to jostle each other out of his Place, and strive for Superiority; when the Glory of infinite Wisdom and Grace, and the Perfection of their Bliss, is display'd and enjoy'd in those various Orbs wherein they're fixt, and in which they shine!

Hence then, if we love God and his Glory, our Brethren and their Happiness, yea, ourselves and our own Bliss; let us rejoice with the Saints in all their Joy. For the Glory of God is advanced

vanced by all the Honour he confers upon his
 Children, and all the Joy he gives them. And
 the Happiness of our Brethren consists therein.
 And as our own personal Bliss is full in our own
 Place, so our relative Bliss rises with the Advance
 of our Brethren's. The Members of Christ's
 Body, have each their own Part of Happiness
 and Glory, full and entire, which none can rob
 them of; yet have they it not separately, by and
 for themselves alone, but with and for the rest.
 The Glory put upon each Member, advanceth
 the Body's Glory; and the Glory of the whole
 Body, devolves upon every Member, by reason
 of that Unity of Life, and Community of Bliss
 which is between them. As in the Body natu-
 ral, the Blood and Spirits from the Heart and
 Head are communicated to all the Members; not
 merely for themselves, but to flow and reflow
 through the rest: So it is in the Body mystical,
 in that Body whereof Christ is the Head; there
 is a Community of Glories between them. Yea,
 the Glory put upon Head and Members is a so-
 cial Glory. The Glory of the Head, is the Bo-
 dy's Glory and Joy; and the Glory put upon
 the Body, is the Head's Joy, yea, he accounts
 it his Glory, his relative Glory. The same Spi-
 rit of Joy and Glory, rests upon and flows thro'
 the whole, unto a Fulness of Bliss, becoming
 the due Proportion between the Head and Mem-
 bers. While from him *the whole Body fitly*
joined together, and compacted by that which every

Joint supplieth, according to the effectual Working in the Measure of every Part, maketh Increase of the Body, unto the Edifying of itself in Love, Eph..iv. 16. 'Tis with the utmost Joy that our dear Lord, our glorious Head, communicates a full Supply of Happiness and Glory unto all his Members, and through each of them, unto the rest: He rejoiceth over them, thus to do them good. And shall not the Members then reciprocally rejoice in one another's Joy, since they are so nearly related to each other, and mutually interested in one another's Bliss! Oh then, let us that are Members of *Christ's* Body, in the Unity of the Spirit have but one Joy! And in that one Joy, mutually rejoice with and over each other, to possess that one Glory, which flows and reflows thro' and upon the whole! And from the inward Affection of Joy in our Hearts, let the outward Expressions thereof flow. In mutual Rejoicings before God, and giving Thanks unto him for one another's Bliss. And in Congratulations of each other, both privately and publickly as the Case requires, while the Blessings of Heaven in free Favours unto full Joys, descend upon the Heirs of GOD!

And let us beware that nothing hinders our Rejoicing with the Saints in all their Joy. Satan labours to sow Discord among Brethren, and to make those twain, who ought to be intimately one. Therefore let us watch against his Devices. And the Saints thro' Sin that dwelleth in

is them, are often wanting in their Love to each other, and are unkind, instead of shewing Kindness. And thro' remaining Selfishness, we are very prone to have our Hearts wean'd from those that we think don't love us. But let us watch against this Evil, and love the Saints for Christ's Sake, for that Relation which they bear to him, and for, and according to their own Excellency; although they should not love us as they ought; yea, in some Things carry towards us like Enemies. Whatever of this Nature we see in them, let us pass by it, pity and pray for them, and let it not hinder our Rejoicing with them whenever the Lord is pleas'd to do them Good. Again, another Thing which hath a Tendency to divide the Saints in Affection, through the Corruption of our Nature, is, the different Denominations they pass by among Men. But let us watch against this also, and love all the Saints of different Persuasions, of different Communions, under all Denominations, as Christians. And let us have Communion with them as far as we can. And where we can't have Communion in Externals, let it be maintain'd in Internals. It is a Spirit much too narrow for a Christian, to love none but those that come up to his own Faith and Light. Let us love the Saints therefore, all of them, as Christians; for their general Name, the Christian Name, more than for any particular Name whatsoever. Let us love them as Brethren, as

Heirs together with us of the Grace of Life; and from our Love towards them, let us rejoice with them in all their Joy; and shew Kindness even for Unkindness, to enkindle a Flame of Love in the coldest of our Brethren, that we may mutually Rejoice with each other for all our Joy. And in all the outward Expressions of Love, as well as in the inward Affection thereof; let us abound more and more. Thus much as to the Duty itself, or what is contained in it. I am to give some Hints,

III. Of the Ends of it, or what should induce us to the Performance hereof. And these are,

1. The glorifying of God in all his Persons.
2. The Comfort and Edification of our Brethren.
3. The Conviction of wicked Men. And 4.

Our own Peace, Joy and Holiness here, and our Lord's Approbation of us at his Appearing.

1. The *pleasing* and *glorifying* of God in all his Persons, is a special End why we should love the Saints. The Glory of God, ought to be the chief End of all our Actions in general; and so of the Performance of this Duty, of Love to the Saints in particular.

Herein is my Father glorify'd, says our Lord, *that ye bring forth much Fruit*, John xv. 8. And the Fruit that is especially intended here, is Love, as Ver. 12. *This is my Commandment, that ye love one another*. And says the Apostle, *Be ye therefore Followers of God, as dear Children*, Eph. v. 1. The God and Father of our Lord
Jesus

Jesus Christ, and our God and Father in him, is glorify'd hereby, when we walk in Love to each other. It is his Will, that his Love to us, in the Image thereof in us, should stand forth to be beheld by others, in our Love to our Brethren. That we should shew, what dear Children we are to him, and what an Influence his dear Love to us hath upon our Souls, by the Dearness of our Love to each other. And as he hath given us Commandment, that we should love one another, as he hath loved us ; we ought to do it, that we may glorify him, both in his Love to us, and Authority over us. We ought likewise to do this, that we may please him. When we walk in Love as dear Children, it is highly pleasing to our Father. *And as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk, says the Apostle, and to please God, see that ye abound more and more, 1 Thes. iv. 1.*

We ought also to love one another, that our dear Lord Jesus may be glorify'd in his Love to us, and Authority over us, as he hath both given us an Example, and Commandment so to do. *And walk in Love, says the Apostle, as Christ also hath loved us, Eph. v. 1.* He accounts himself glorify'd in us, when we bear his Love-Image upon our Souls in our Carriage towards our Brethren. And as we ought to love one another, that the Name of our Lord Jesus may be glorify'd in us, so likewise that we may please him. *These Things have I spoken unto you (says he)*

that my Joy might remain in you, John iv. 19. It glads Christ's Heart, it delights him exceedingly, to see us walk in Love, as dear Children, even as he hath commanded us.

And for the Glory of the Holy Ghost the Comforter, we ought to walk in Love, as his dear Children. For as he is God equal with the Father and the Son, so he is one with both in Love to us, and Authority over us. And the Command of Love from the Father and the Son, was immediately given by the Holy Ghost. For his Honour then, as the God of Love, and our God, for the Glory of his Love to us in a peculiar Manner, in his indwelling Presence with us, in his bearing with us in all our Weaknesses, in his forgiving all our Provocations, in his healing all our Diseases, and in his becoming an everlasting Flow of Love to us, let us love one another; to shew forth the Glory of his Love to us, and of his Work upon us, and that Duty which we owe to him. Yea, let us do this, that we may please him. For it's highly pleasing to the heavenly Dove, when we walk in Obedience to his Dictates, in a meek, loving, Dove-like Spirit towards our dear Brethren. And therefore, whatever is contrary to Love, is explicitly forbidden, that we mayn't grieve him; and all that is contained in it implicitly commanded, that we may please him. *And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the Day of Redemption,*

John. iv. 30. To glorify and please God then, the Three-one God, to advance his manifestative Glory in the Earth, let us love one another. For the God of Love is highly dishonour'd, and displeased when we do not. But,

2. *The Comfort and Edification of the Saints,* is a great End why we should love them. Love brings Abundance of Comfort to the Saints in all the Times that pass over them, in Prosperity and Adversity. It easeth them when oppress'd, enlightens them when dark, warms them when cold, revives them when fainting, strengthens them when weak, heals them when diseased, and enlargeth them when in Confinement; and when rejoicing, it makes their Joy more full. It sweetens all their bitter Potions, and makes their pleasant Things more delicious. And in a Word, it is as it were a Stream of Heaven's Joy and Sweetness let out upon their Souls, which wafts them apace towards that Ocean of Joy and Glory which is there prepar'd for them. And as there is much *Comfort of Love*; so much *Edification*. *Knowledge puffeth up, but Charity edifieth,* Phil. ii. 1. 1 Cor. viii. 1. It builds up Saints and Churches, and raiseth them apace, to be an Habitation of God thro' the Spirit. Oh the Sweetness of Love! The Fragrancy of the Spirit of Love, that *Oil of Gladness*, which descends from Christ the Head upon all the Members, and from one upon another! How great is its Delight! How precious is its Fruit! It is no less than

than the Dew of Heaven, the Blessing of Life, even *Life for evermore*! Behold, says the Psalmist, how good and pleasant it is, for Brethren to dwell together in Unity. It is like the precious Ointment upon the Head, that ran down upon the Beard, even Aaron's Beard, that went down to the Skirts of his Garments. As the Dew of Hermon, and as the Dew that descended upon the Mountains of Zion; for there the LORD commanded the Blessing, even *Life for evermore*, Psa. cxxxiii. Let us then that love the Lord, love one another dearly. Let us live in Love and Peace, and the God of Love and Peace shall be with us, 2 Cor. xiii. 11.

3. The Conviction of wicked Men, is another End why the Saints should love one another. By this shall all Men know that ye are my Disciples, saith our Lord, if ye have Love one to another, John xiii. 35. Love is a main Duty, whereby we should put to silence the Ignorance of foolish Men. If we lov'd the Brotherhood, as we ought, if we were one pure Piece of Love to each other, what a Conviction would this strike into the Consciences of the Wicked! Love is of God; and by this the Children of God are manifest. Wherever Love is to be seen in the Saints towards each other, and to all Men, it shines with a convincing Glory; that God dwells in such Persons, and that they are of God. The Wicked can't see the Saints in their inward, Heart-glory; but they see their outward Carriage.
And

And when this is contrary to Love, it hardens them in their Sin, gives them Occasion to blaspheme that worthy Name by which we are called, and makes them think, that there's nothing in Religion. And indeed, if we hate, bite and devour one another, it makes us look very unlike the Disciples of our meek and loving Master, Christ; and ill becomes our Character as the Sheep of his Pasture, the Doves of his Delight. If therefore we would commend the Ways of God to others, and strike Sinners with a Conviction of their Excellency and Glory; let us walk in Love. Once more,

4. If we regard our own *Peace, Joy and Holiness* here, and our *Lord's Approbation* of us at his Appearing; let us love one another, with a pure Heart fervently. We cannot make War against our Brethren, but we break our own Peace. As hereby we dishonour, and displease the God of Love and Peace, and grieve the sacred Dove, so he leaves us to our own Spirits, to be like a troubled Sea, which cannot rest, whose Waters cast up Mire and Dirt. Whereas if we walk in Love, we have great Peace, abundant Peace, tho' War should be round about us. If our Brethren don't love us as they ought, yet if we love them, and render Love for Unkindness, and Blessing for Cursing; we have abundant Peace, Peace like a River overflowing our Souls. *Great Peace have they that love God's Law; his Law of Love, and nothing shall offend them, Psal.*
 cxix.

ciii. 165. And so far as we are lacking in our
 Love to the Saints, so far our Joy is imperfect.
 In keeping Christ's Command, of loving one ano-
 ther as he hath loved us, our Joy is full. This
 was his End in giving it; and ought to be ours
 in obeying it, *John xiv. 11.* And so much as
 we are wanting in Love to the Saints, so much
 we are wanting in Holiness. Love is as it were
 the very Effence of a Christian, of Christianity in
 his Soul. As appears from *1 Cor. xiii.* What-
 ever we are in other Gifts and Duties, without
 Love, we are *nothing* in true Christianity, we
 are *nothing* in real Holiness. So far as we love
 God and each other, just so much is our Holi-
 ness; as the one increaseth, the other advanceth.
 Love is a perfecting Grace; and as our great Du-
 ty, is our great Privilege, so much as we love
 one another, so much we are like God, and
 so much Fruit we bring forth. So far as our
 Love abounds, our Meetness for Glory increaseth.
 And therefore the Apostle pray'd for the *Thessa-*
lonians, that the Lord would make them to in-
crease and abound in Love one towards another, and
to all Men: To the end he might stablish their
Hearts unblameable in Holiness before him, 1 Thes.
iii. 12, 13. And we ought to increase and abound
 in Love to each other, unto unblameable Holi-
 ness before God, with an Eye to that great Day
 when our Lord shall appear, as it follows; *At*
the Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, with all his
Saints. Our Lord will shortly appear to take
 Account

Account of his Servants, and of all their Behaviour in the present State. And sad will be the Case of those in that Day, who *eat and drink with the drunken, and smite their Fellow-servants* in this World, *Luke xii. 46.* If they are such that have only made a Profession of Christ's Name, and never had true Faith in their Hearts, he will then *appoint them their Portion with the Unbelievers* in the Torments of Hell. And if they are such that have believed unto the Salvation of their Souls; yet may they have their Portion with Unbelievers, in Regard of their Works being burnt up. We read of some that *shall be sav'd so as by Fire,* *1 Cor. ii. 15.* *If any Man's Work shall be burnt, he shall suffer the Loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by Fire.* And then follows; *Know ye not that ye are the Temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any Man defile the Temple of God, him shall God destroy: for the Temple of God is holy, which Temple ye are, Ver. 16, 17.* So that if any Man defile the Temple of God, by bringing into it any unholy Doctrines or Practices, any thing contrary to Truth and Love; he may expect a partial Destruction at the Coming of our Lord, with all his Saints; That God will destroy him in that fiery Day, with respect to his Works; that he shall suffer the Loss of all that Praise, Honour and Glory which he should have had, if he had abode in Christ, in Truth and Love; and be blam'd and sham'd

in the Presence of God and the Lamb, and before the Saints and Angels. And therefore the Apostle John exhorteth the Saints, to *abide in Christ*, (in the Faith of him; and in Love to him and his) that they *mayn't be ashamed before him at his Coming*, but *have Confidence when he appears*, 1 John ii. 28. *Wherefore we labour*, saith the Apostle Paul, *that whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him*. (That is, with Respect to our Works; and so in this of Love to the Saints in particular) *For we must all appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ, that every one may receive the Things done in his Body*, (in Praise or Rebuke, in Glory or Shame) *according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad*, 2 Cor. v. 9, 10. If therefore we would have our Lord's *well done*, his Approbation of us as good and *faithful* Servants, as obedient Children at his Coming, let us shew all Brotherly Kindness to each other in Love. For not the least Favour we ever shew'd to the least of his, shall be lost in that Day. Our Lord will then commend our Obedience before all, and declare how kindly he took it, even as done to himself. And so an Entrance shall be ministred unto us abundantly into his everlasting Kingdom, *Mat. xxv. 40. 2 Pet. xi.*

Having given some Hints briefly of the three first Things propos'd: Of the Reasons and Grounds, why the Saints should love one another. Of the Duty itself, or what is contained in it: And of the Ends of it, or what should induce us to the Performance thereof: I shall,

IV. With

IV. With a Word of Exhortation conclude the whole. And are there such good Reasons, why the Saints should love one another? Is there so much in the Duty itself? And are the Ends of it so great? From hence then, let us be humbled before the Lord, that we have loved each other no more. Oh who of us can say we are clean from this Abomination of inordinate Self-Love, and Want of Love to our Brethren! Surely for this, among other Evils, the Lord hath a Controversy at this Day with his People in *England*. He hath *somewhat against us*. Even this, that we have *left our first Love*. He *planted us a right noble Vine*. But oh we are *turned into the degenerate Plant of a strange Vine* unto him! The Lord hath done so much for his Church, his Vineyard here, with Respect to Gospel-Privileges, that he may well say, *What could have been done more for it, that I have not done?* What People have been favour'd like us, with Gospel-Blessings! And from these Displays of God's Love towards us, he *looked that we should bring forth Fruit*; the Fruit of Love to him and his, that we should thus love him again, for his first, his distinguishing Love towards us. But lo, when he *looked for Grapes*, we *brought forth wild Grapes*! And may we not justly expect that he will pluck up the *Hedge* of his Protection, and let in the *wild Boar of the Forest* to lay us waste? That he will let in Antichristian Enemies upon us to destroy our Privileges, since we
have

...to be *humbled*, and *humbled*...
...is the *Thing* itself! We have left God,
and provok'd him to depart from us; and he is
gone in a great Measure, as to his sensible, pow-
erful Presence, from the Persons, Families and
Churches of the Saints. His Glory seems to be
upon the Threshold of the House. And unless
we remember from whence we are fallen, repent,
and do our first Works, he will quite forsake us,
remove our Candlestick out of its Place, and give
up the dearly Beloved of his Soul into the Hand
of her Enemies. If we continue in our Luke-
warmness, neither cold nor hot, in our Love to
the Lord and his People, he will most certainly
spue us out of his Mouth. And how near that
awful Day is, a little more Time may discover.
The Lord will not always bear with our Dead-
ness, since we have a Name to live: But will put
us into the Furnace, and melt us down, to purge
away our Dross, and brighten our Grace. For,
Blessed be his Name, he will bring us forth of
the Fire, as Gold seven Times refined, more
bright and shining, bearing his Love-Image in a
greater Glory than ever. But how great Cala-
mities the Lord may bring upon us for the Neg-
lect of this Duty of Love, as well as for other
Evils, none but himself knows! Let us not then
provoke the Lord hereby, until there is no Re-
medy.

before the Lord bring forth
 our whole Heart; fight
 as if we were to die, and yet, a who can tell but he may return and
 come out, and leave a Blessing behind him! Oh let
 our Tears past suffice, that we have lov'd the
 Saints, as if we lov'd them not! Let us be watch-
 ful, as our dear Lord has commanded, to
strengthen the Things which remain, that are
ready to die.

And great is our Encouragement so to do, since
 our loving Lord, altho' he has been speaking
 against us, doth earnestly remember us still. He
 remembers us, the Kindness of our Youth, the
 Love of our Espousals, when we went after him
 in the Wilderness, in a Land that was not sown;
 when we first set out for God and his Service,
 under the attracting Displays of his Love, in the
 Face of a thousand Difficulties. And, Oh how
 kindly did he take it, that then we, and the first
 Fruits of our Increase were Holiness unto the
 LORD! Jer. ii. 2, 3. But, Ah! the Crown
 is fallen from our Head: We have forsaken the
 LORD! And well he may reason the Case
 with us now, as with his People of old; *what*
Iniquity have your Fathers found in me, that they
are gone far from me, and walked after Vanity,
and are become vain? ver. 5. And, says he, *O*
Generation, see the Word of the LORD: (This
 is his Voice even to us, to the Generation of
 Professors now in England) *Have I been a Wil-*
derness unto Israel? A Land of Darkness? Where-

Oh did we not enjoy a Soul-satisfying
Sweetness, a ravishing Glory in God and his
Service, when we were first converted to him,
and made Religion our Business! Wherefore then
do we say, *we are Lords, we will come no more
at him!* Why are we careless about his Service,
the Obedience of Love, as if we were our own?
And contented to live at such a Distance from
Communion with God in Love, and Confor-
mity to him, as the most of us do at this Day!
Oh is not our God and his Service our Glory!
And can we forget him, our adorning, our bright
Array; and walk naked, as it were before Men,
uncloath'd of those Glories we once shone in!
And yet this is the Case: We have forgotten
our God, Days without Number! We have
changed our Glory, for that which doth not
profit, but is Matter of our Shame! Yet hath
not our God forgotten us. No! Go (saith he)
*and proclaim these Words toward the North, and
say, return thou backsliding Israel, saith the
LORD, and I will not cause mine Anger to fall
upon you: for I am merciful, saith the LORD,
and I will not keep Anger for ever. Only acknow-
ledge thine Iniquity that thou hast transgressed
against the LORD thy God, and hast scattered
thy Ways unto the Strangers under every green
Tree,*

We have a rich, fruitful season, the holy Cross,
 unto a rich Increase of all Grace, unto all Blessings,
 and requesting your Prayer for the Least of
 Catholics, and a Blessing upon this week Labour
 of Love. Amen.

Yours affectionately,

